

# **Connotation: Finding a Word's Emotional Charge** **Intensive Reading – M. Nolan**

The words in each column have the same general meaning. However, while their general meanings are similar, their connotation—or emotional charge—is quite different. Words may have a positive, negative or neutral charge.

| Column 1   | Column 2 | Column 3 | Column 4       |
|------------|----------|----------|----------------|
| fat        | small    | quiet    | self-confident |
| plump      | petite   | timid    | conceited      |
| overweight | shrimpy  | reserved | poised         |

**Exercise A:** Write the word from each column that you would use to *flatter* someone.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_

**Exercise B:** Write the word from each column that you would use to *insult* someone.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_ 4. \_\_\_\_\_



**Exercise C:** In each row below are three words with similar meanings. Put a plus sign in the blank after the positive word in each row. Put a minus sign after the negative word in each row. Do not put anything beside the neutral word in each row.

|   |                 |                    |                  |
|---|-----------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | lazy _____      | relaxed _____      | slow _____       |
| 2 | chicken _____   | cautious _____     | cowardly _____   |
| 3 | mousy _____     | quiet _____        | modest _____     |
| 4 | out-dated _____ | time-tested _____  | old _____        |
| 5 | dignified _____ | stiff-necked _____ | reserved _____   |
| 6 | stubborn _____  | persistent _____   | obdurate _____   |
| 7 | new _____       | new-fangled _____  | up-to-date _____ |
| 8 | curious _____   | nosy _____         | concerned _____  |

**Exercise D:** Many words are similar in meaning but suggest a different degree of a specific quality. Plot the point where each word in the following sets of synonyms would fall on a “degree of intensity continuum.”

## **Synonym Group 1:**

- A. joyful
- B. pleased
- C. happy
- D. elated
- E. ecstatic

## **Synonym Group 2:**

- A. melancholy
- B. depressed
- C. blue
- D. morose
- E. down

## **Synonym Group 3:**

- A. thought-provoking
- B. gripping
- C. interesting
- D. fascinating
- E. intriguing

1. Lowest Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Highest Degree

2. Lowest Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Highest Degree

3. Lowest Degree \_\_\_\_\_ Highest Degree